**Environmental Assessment** 

Title: Dry Creek Riparian Fence and Spring Development

**EA Number: OR-054-04-002** 

Name and Location of Preparing Office: Central Oregon Resource Area, Prineville,

Oregon.

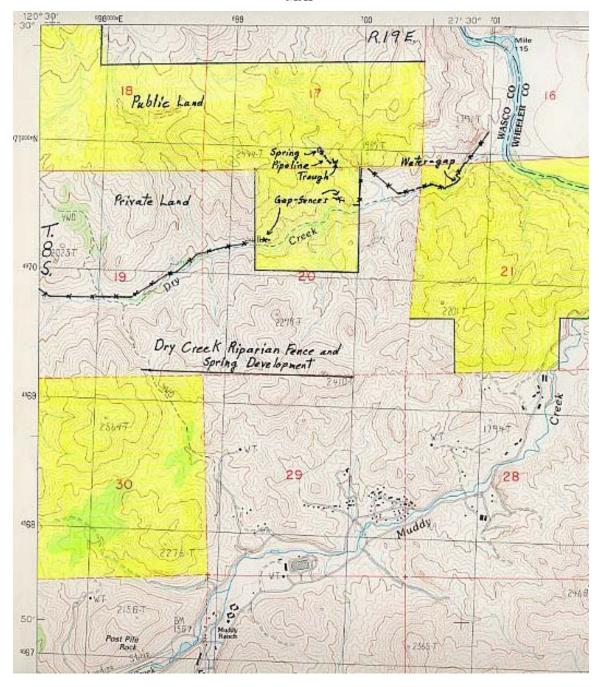
**Conformance and Consistency:** The proposed action is consistent with the following land use plans: Two Rivers RMP, June 1986, and the John Day River Management Plan, February 2001.

**Purpose and Need:** The purpose of the fence is to exclude livestock grazing from a portion of public land on 0.8 miles of Dry Creek. Also, to join in a cooperative effort with the private land owner (Young Life), the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Wheeler County Soil and Watershed Conservation District Board (SWCD) to improve three miles of Dry Creek. Young Life has entered into a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) with the NRCS to fence off approximately 2.2 miles of the lower portion of Dry Creek from livestock and plant native riparian woody species. The BLM manages land at two different locations along this portion of Dry Creek. (See attached map). In order to make this CREP effort effective, the BLM would authorize the construction of approximately 0.4 miles of fence by Young Life on public land. The purpose of the spring development is to provide a water source for livestock in lieu of Dry Creek and to help improve livestock distribution in the pasture. In addition to the spring development, a water-gap would be constructed on Dry Creek to provide livestock water and aid in pasture distribution. These projects are in the Lower Dry Creek Pasture, of the Big Muddy Allotment (2512) and Young Life hold the authorization to graze public land.

The objectives for the BLM and CREP projects are to improve the riparian zone, increase water flow, improve water quality, and increase water storage on a portion of Dry Creek.

**Description of the Proposed Action:** The fence on public land would be four wires and located on portions of T. 8 S., R. 19 E., Sections 20 and 21. Construction would be done by Young Like and materials would be provided by the NRCS. Two gap-fences and the anchor point for a fence on private land would be constructed in Section 20. Existing natural rock barriers would be used to minimize fencing. The fence in Section 21 would be north of the creek and road except for a water-gap where the fence would cross the creek and run for about 75 feet on the south side before crossing back. The water-gap is located on a portion of the creek that is well gaveled so turbidity would be minimal.

The fence would be constructed with a barbless bottom wire and barbed top wires. The bottom wire would be 16 inches from the ground, the next wire 6 inches above the first, the third wire 6 inches above the second, and the fourth wire 12 inches above the third. Post spacing would be one rod and as-needed for the two gap fences. Metal twist stays would be installed equal-distance between posts.



The spring development would be constructed by the BLM. The collection method would be perforated pipe sandwiched between gravel and filter cloth. Water would be piped though two inch diameter PVC pipe, underground for approximately 500 feet to a 300 gallon metal trough. The trough would be supported on treated eight-by-eight inch timbers. The water would flow continually unless it is determined that it would benefit the integrity of the spring to have the flow terminated during periods of nonuse. A bird ramp would be installed to provide an exit for small birds and mammals that may fall into

the trough. A buried overflow pipe would be installed at the trough to return excess water to the channel.

A four wire fence would enclose the water collection portion of the spring and would be constructed to the same specifications as the fence described above. It would be approximately 300 feet in length and 75 feet in width across the drainage. Some of the junipers in the channel would be felled in such a way as to discourage livestock use of the spring area above and below the fenced portion.

The pasture would be winter grazed which should allow for more even distribution of livestock. The cold air which concentrates in the drainage bottoms encourages livestock to graze on the higher slopes. Also, the animal's consumption of water would be less then other times of the year. In addition to the spring development on public land and the water-gap, two additional spring developments on private land will provide water.

The area between Dry and Muddy Creek would not be grazed, it consists of approximately 900 acres of private land and 680 acres of public.

**Alternatives:** No action is the only other alternative considered.

<b>Environmental Impacts</b>	Affected			Affected	
Critical Elements	Yes	No	Critical Element	Yes	No
Air Quality		X	T & E Plants		X
ACEC's		X	Tribal Concerns & Treaty Rights		X
Cultural Resources		X	Wastes, Hazardous/Solid		X
Environmental Justice		X	Water Quality, Drinking/Ground		X
Farmlands, Prime/Unique		X	Wetlands/Riparian Zones		X
Floodplains		X	Wild & Scenic Rivers		X
T & E Animals		X	Wilderness		X
T & E Fish		X			

**Description of Impacts:** The fence construction would have little impact. The area is very rocky and there is an existing road close to the proposed fence location that would be used as access for construction. All material for the two gap-fences would be hand-carried to the sites.

The water-gap is located at an area with a great deal of cobble. Livestock using the area would harden the surface so very little silt would move down stream. The three additional water sources in the pasture would reduce the demand at the water-gap and help distribute livestock evenly over the pasture.

The spring materials would be hauled cross country by pickup truck for about 800 feet and then hand carried to the site. The soil is a cobbly loam so little compaction would be expected by using a half-ton pickup. The water catchments at the spring and the pipeline would require digging trenches. The depth at the spring would be between 24 and 36 inches and the pipeline would be about 12 inches. All digging would be done by-hand.

Impacts of No Action: The fences would be constructed on private land to exclude livestock from Dry Creek, but not on public land. This would concentrate the livestock use on 0.8 mile of stream instead of the present 3.0 miles. This would result in unwanted bank damage and greater use on riparian vegetation. Without the spring development, livestock would be further concentrated on the stream because of less water in the uplands.

Date:

Environmental Coordinator: